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THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

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THE question whether the church has any duties toward the labor movement arises, not from theoretical, but from practical considerations. There has, indeed, been contact between the two in many ways, but the propriety of such contact has been denied. The movement among workingmen, it is said, has for its object the improvement of their social condition, and pursues this end through political means. But both the end and the means are foreign to the church, since the latter aims only at the spiritual welfare of man, and endeavors to secure this by exclusively spiritual means. Religion, it is maintained, has nothing to do with politics, and the intrusion of the one into the other has always had consequences of the most questionable character. And so far as political economy is concerned, Jesus himself had barred all attempts to enlist him in its cause by the word: "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14).

Who would doubt the correctness of these views in general? The danger of seeking to gain political ends by spiritual means, or spiritual ends by worldly weapons, is seen only too clearly in the Roman Catholic church. Nevertheless, the case is not disposed of by these generalizations. The history of the nineteenth century forces problems upon us that can be solved only by a more careful inquiry into the points of contact between the task of the church and the labor movement. Was not the Chartist movement in England a labor movement? And this movement could not be suppressed either by force of arms or by political measures; the solution of the problem began only when Christians espoused the cause in the name of the gospel. And in Germany it was Wichern, the father of the revival of the work of the church in Inner Missions, who said in the celebrated memorial

of 1849 that the church should enter actively "into the perplexing problems and questions of modern times; only thus could it be enabled to give practical proof that nothing human is foreign to Christianity, but rather that all human things are very near to it; indeed, it is these first of all which it desires to permeate with the sanctifying and transforming power of the gospel, in order to accomplish that which must remain impossible to every other power and wisdom that attempts to solve the problem without the gospel. For the necessity of such a participation of the church in the solution of this social question, which is more insistently demanding decision than ever before, nothing could speak more decidedly and convincingly than the fact that just in relation to these problems the spirit of antagonism to Christianity has become such a power as to set the different classes of society in violent opposition to one another."

At that time also V. A. Huber exhorted the church not to shut itself up in cold indifference toward the developments and problems of public life. The conditions of the poor and of the workingmen required to be met, not only by works of charity, but also with clear knowledge of their circumstances, and of the accompanying political and economic forces. The exponents of social and political economy, Knies, Roscher, Schäffle, and others, demanded of the church, school, etc., that they come forth from their seclusion, and acquire a knowledge of political economy and help to conquer the materialism of modern political science. In England, through the influence of Christian socialists, the labor question had been grappled with as far back as 1840. It was clergymen that called attention to the condition of the laboring classes and made social amelioration a Christian duty. Nor did they insist upon aid for the workingmen through charity, but upon a transformation of economic conditions. They met with great success, and have helped to give to the whole science of social and political economy a new direction.

In Germany this science had already freed itself from the principles of selfishness which had prevailed in the doctrines of

liberalism. The German scholars mentioned above had already insisted upon the necessity of ideals for the economic life. But when men identified with the church tried to meet their demands, when Todt inquired what points of view for the estimate of socialism are to be derived from the gospel, when Stöcker began to preach, not only to the court and the higher classes, but also to workingmen, and to inform himself concerning their interests and demands, then there arose violent opposition. It was declared that the church should not meddle with economic questions. And this is the situation today. The difference of opinion on this question is still very great in Germany.

And how is it in America? The United States constitutes a great experimental field where for more than a hundred years the most various communities have tried to realize from the Christian point of view that which is also the aim of the labor movement, viz., the elevation and happiness of the laboring classes, and to secure a satisfactory relation between different classes. I refer to the numerous communistic societies. These show us that there must be a possibility of contact between the work of the church and the labor movement. And even at the present time, in view of the violent convulsions from which the whole public life often suffers through the struggles of workingmen to improve their condition, the question thrusts itself upon us: Can the church, which in America is a power influencing public life, do nothing whatever to exercise a healthful influence upon these convulsions? Are the task of the church and that of the labor movement two phenomena running so perfectly parallel to each other that their lines touch or cross at no point?

It is, therefore, the task of theology to shed light upon this practical question through theoretical inquiry. And this is to be done by elucidating critically both the nature of the function of the church and the impelling forces underlying the labor movement in order to find points where they touch. And probably I am not mistaken when I suppose that my readers desire information concerning the second of these questions more than concerning the first. Therefore I shall begin with a presentation of the underlying forces of the labor movement.

The labor movement arose in Europe and is a part of the great social revolutions which, since the eighteenth century, have permeated all countries. Before this time the individual estates and classes were fairly well differentiated; they each had their own particular functions, duties, and rights, wherein they were protected by law. But now new economic conditions arose, into which the old arrangements did not fit. The citizen class, the so-called third estate, did not possess the rights which were its due according to the importance to which it had attained in public life. This led to the struggles of the French Revolution, in which the third estate came out victorious. Henceforth money or property became the determining power. Capitalism, that system under which influence in the state and political power are determined by the amount of wealth which one possesses, now arose.

However, with the beginning of the Revolution a fourth estate had arisen — as a consequence of the development of the trades into industries through the introduction of machinery. A new class of men had entered the field, the workingmen, who were in the market with their physical labor, and, wherever this was accepted, worked under a voluntary agreement for wages. These workingmen sided with the third estate in the Revolution, but they did not realize till about forty years later that their interests and those of the third estate were totally antagonistic. According to the system of capitalism, they had no political influence whatever, because possessing no property, and yet they began to realize of how great importance they were under the new conditions. St. Simon first pointed out the difference between the *bourgeois* and the *peuple*, the former the property-owners and rulers through the power of money, the latter the dependent laborers, who, as the weaker party, were always defeated in any free wage contract. In England, where industry had the greatest development, the sad conditions of the laboring classes first appeared in a strong light. In France the workingmen first formed themselves into a political party and now we find such parties in all European countries.

The common feature in the effort of all combinations of

workingmen in Europe is that they endeavor first of all to render secure their condition and to protect it against the changes of industrial life, in which not only wages fluctuate very much, but crises and stagnation in business also occur, which, forcing idleness upon thousands of workingmen who are dependent upon the daily work of their hands, bring them to the verge of destruction. They endeavor to secure their object through coalition, through the combination of all such as have similar interests. At first this was attempted through purely economic combinations, consumers' unions, and associations which were intended to make existence easier for the man of small means as over against the great industrial corporations. Later the same end was sought to be accomplished through labor unions, *i. e.*, combinations of all the workers in one trade throughout the country, in order that in making his contract for wages the single worker might not be compelled to deal with the powerful capitalist, but might make such contract on principles uniform for the whole mass of workers, in which case the negotiations would naturally issue in more equitable results. Through such combinations the workingman escapes the necessity of being forced to sell his labor for whatever price, however low, may be offered by industrial concerns. Through refusal to work (a strike) higher wages can now also be secured.

The labor movement exerts itself either in the purely economic sphere, in the trades, the strikes, the brotherhoods that seek the improvement of their conditions; or else upon the political field, by sending representatives to legislative bodies, in order in the very framing of the laws to represent the interests of workingmen.

It is self-evident, however, that their effort is now no longer directed simply to obtaining protection against the insecurity of their condition, but also toward an elevation of the class itself, toward securing higher wages, shortening of the hours of labor, improvement of the conditions of life, better education of all members of the working class.

It is peculiar to the labor movement in Europe that from its beginning it bore, not only a revolutionary, but also an

anti-religious character. It is not difficult to account for this fact. The modern labor movement arose at a time when the religious life of the church was at its lowest, in France as well as in Germany and England. In periods of religious vitality economic endeavors easily associate themselves with religious aims. The clearest example of this is the insurrections of the peasants (the working class of that time) before and during the Reformation. Those insurrections present many resemblances to the labor movement of the nineteenth century. Economically, it was then as now a progressive age. There was a large class of poor people who were benefited but very slightly by this progress, and nothing but hopeless ruin was the prospect that confronted the great mass of them. Then as now there was a coalition of the weaker elements of society which tried to maintain their existence through united exertion. Then as now the air was full of undeveloped theories of strongly communistic coloring about the improvement of society. But as respects the attitude of the movement toward religion, what a difference between that and the present time! Then appeal was made to divine justice, to primitive Christian conceptions, to evangelical liberty; and coupled with this was the demand for the preaching of the unadulterated gospel.¹ But today we see only hatred against the "parsons," derision of religion, and fierce opposition to all the work of the church.

The explanation of this difference is found partly in the character of the times, partly in the different attitude of the church. In regard to the former it is worthy of note that the first social-revolutionary phenomena of the nineteenth century coincide with a violent apostasy from the Christian religion and its conception of the world on the part of large portions of the more educated classes. Materialism, based upon an abuse of the natural sciences, gained great influence. And, though the sixteenth century was not free from unbelief (to mention only the Italian Humanism), nevertheless today the interrelations of the different classes of society with one another and the publicity

¹ See my work, *Die christlich-socialen Ideen der Reformationszeit und ihre Vorgeschichte*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1897.

of our life through the rise of the press have made things very different from what they were then. The peasants of that time knew nothing of the epicureanism of the educated, while today every workingman has easy access to all that is taught by skeptical professors, poets, and philosophers.

In addition to this we have the different attitude of the church. To be sure, the discontented workingmen of the sixteenth century rightly saw in the official church their enemy. With its continued demand for money and its acquisition of real estate, it was lying like a mountain-weight upon the economic life of the people. But at the same time they knew of other exponents of Christianity, *i. e.*, the Reformers, that were very friendly to them, who, for ecclesiastical reasons rising against the hierarchy, by this furthered their ends also. Thus the whole mass of workingmen, though confusing the nature of evangelical liberty with their own desire for freedom, joined hands with the Reformers. In the middle of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, the labor movement found itself in the presence of a church taken up with interests far other than the welfare of the people. Theological scholasticism built systems, consumed itself in strife over ritual formulas; but when men like Wichern pleaded for the work of Inner Mission, it protested loudly against such a menace to the existence of the church. Unfortunately those parties which in fervent love and fiery zeal entered the work of the Inner Mission had only to a very limited degree the insight necessary to estimate and understand the forces active in the labor movement. So the latter, left an orphan by the church, grew into an abnormity.

And when the church awoke to its duties in regard to social questions, it was too late to give the entire movement a different direction, to change the general situation to correspond with it. At present the leading spirits of the labor movement on the European continent are anti-Christian fanatics, who show far more zeal for their political and philosophical theories than for the practical needs of the workingmen. Besides this there is the fact that among these leaders there is a large number of Jewish journalists, who, having cast off their own religion, retain

only their hatred of Christ. These things explain the opposition of the European labor movement to the church.

If now we turn to America, we find that in the United States the labor movement has had an entirely different history.² There the labor problem is much more recent. In Europe this problem arose from the fact that the masses of workingmen, confined in relatively small countries, in which industries developed, were driven to the necessity either to emigrate or else to work for any price and put up with any dependent condition imposed upon them. In America the industrial regions along the coast had back of them immense territories with the most varied opportunities for obtaining a livelihood. The population was much less stationary. It had come from the Old World in order to find more favorable circumstances than at home, and, if conditions were not pleasing on the coast, it would go farther inland. On this account the consciousness of the solidarity of the class and of common interests could not develop itself so soon. Not until colonization had progressed farther and great centers of industry began to be formed also in the interior could conditions arise similar to those of the Old World. And with these, coalitions of workingmen arose there also. The trades united, and trades organizations were formed. These combined again into more general unions, and thus in 1866 the National Labor Union was formed. However, all the older unions, the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor (1881), differ considerably from the labor parties of Europe formed by the social democrats. Not, indeed, that the American workmen are more modest than their European brothers; for

²Of course, I am not acquainted with it from personal observation, but I rely on the writings of SARTORIUS VON WALTERSHAUSEN, *Der moderne Socialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika*, 1896; and by the same, *Die modernen Gewerkschaften*, 1886; KULEMANN, *Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, 1900 (North America, p. 159); LEVASSEUR, *L'ouvrier américain*, 1898, and by the same writer, "Du degré de bien-être de l'ouvrier aux États-Unis," in the *Journal des Économistes*, 1897, p. 29; in the same journal the "Lettres des États-Unis" by GEORGE NESTER TRICOCKE, 1900, Vol. 41. I refer further to PAUL DE ROUSSIER, *La vie américaine*, 1892; and to STEAD, *The War between Capital and Labor in the United States* (translated into German by Pannwitz, 1894); MONDANI, *La questione dei negri nella storia e nella società Nordamericana*, 1898; ROCHETIN, "Les œuvres d'assistance mutuelle en Amérique," in the *Journal des Économistes*, February, 1898.

the former make higher demands upon life, their wages are better, and their manner of life is much less simple. The assertive self-consciousness, stimulated by the immense economic development and the democratic form of government, the entire absence of all conservative-patriarchal relations, lead to a rather reckless procedure on the part of the labor unions. Strikes are frequent and violent, and though peaceful arbitration is advocated, yet most unions have their own strike funds.

Still, these unions are not carried away with materialistic principles, and the movement has not developed into one hostile to the government, as is the case in Germany, nor has it acquired such proportions as to become dangerous to the rest of the population. Most of its leaders are strictly religious, often leaning toward the temperance movement. It is, indeed, a peculiarity of the English-American nature that a religious trend dominates these organizations. This possibly explains the tendency of their unions, though they aim chiefly at economical results, to take on the semi-religious appearance of an order, with every sort of fantastic ritual.

Lately, however, the American labor movement has taken on a new aspect through the increase of the German element. The more German workingmen immigrate, the more do socialistic principles spread, and that in their most violent and most developed form, viz., anarchism. For a time it even seemed as if the socialist element was to become dominant among these workingmen. But the anarchistic excesses brought them to their senses, and it can be said that the American labor movement still differs from the European as sketched above. When, in 1896, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was formed, it was in opposition to the "corrupt and unprogressive" older unions. This phrase expresses the hatred which the materialistic social democrats feel toward the American workingman, and their anger that he will not in general permit himself to be won over to their revolutionary and anti-Christian schemes. The Knights of Labor are said to contain relatively the largest socialistic element; but even among them this is in the minority.

It is true that communistic ideas have entered to some extent

into the largest labor unions, but, nevertheless, the opposition to socialism in the form of the social democracy has not ceased. Communism is simply a theory as to the best disposition of property, and the adoption of it at some time is one of their aims, yet they do not attempt to introduce it by force, but are content to hope that the insight of society will finally lead to it. The American workingmen and labor leaders are too practical to allow such utopian ideas to shape their conduct. It is also significant that the Socialist Labor Alliance consists chiefly of unskilled workingmen, who naturally have much less interest in peaceful development than members of the trades unions proper.

Still, all labor movements, no matter how differently they may develop in America or Europe, and with what shades of divergence again in the separate countries of the latter continent, have common characteristics. Everywhere the free wage-earners, who form one of the most numerous classes of the people in modern times, have come to a consciousness of their solidarity. Everywhere they have learned to know that there is strength in union, and they use their united strength to procure for themselves a firmer and higher economic condition—a condition secure, on the one hand, against the pressure to which they may be subjected in the natural relation between capital and labor, and against the precariousness of their existence, which is frequently conditioned upon economic circumstances over which they have no influence whatever, such as slackness of business and times of enforced idleness; a condition, on the other hand, higher than the workingman could secure single-handed, since he would be forced to sell his labor for the smallest wages offered, which might be sufficient in times of health to provide for his family, but is not calculated with a view to protect him against sickness, old age, special misfortunes, and unexpected times of need.

Security and elevation of life—this, then, is the end, and, we say, the just end, which workingmen endeavor to realize. And this elevation has for its object not alone higher wages; it also aims to obtain sufficient time for family life, a share of the blessings of civilization, the enjoyment of so much luxury as is the

just due of the class, proper homes, and opportunities to foster the spiritual and intellectual life, etc. Of course, all lazy and easy-going workmen will fall in with these ideas, but it would be a great mistake to call all who aim at these things lazy, indolent, and pleasure-loving. For all those aims and desires are in themselves noble, good, and worthy of endeavor. They are all human, and such that every man, from a reasonable point of view, is in his own way, to some extent, entitled to them.

Having now become acquainted with the labor movement in its general outlines, we can turn to the question: Where does the work of the church come into contact with the labor movement? But first of all we must come to an understanding as to the meaning of the word "church." In a Roman Catholic periodical this would not be necessary. There it would be taken for granted that it refers to the clergy, and the question would be: What have priests, pastors, and bishops to do with the labor question? Among evangelical Christians, however, the word "church" has a different meaning. Since Luther's time we know that in the church of Jesus Christ no class has a monopoly of the preaching of the Word, and that even the layman needs no human mediation to come to God, and that everyone who has received grace has with it also taken upon himself the duty of witnessing for Jesus Christ. When, then, we ask: What sort of task has the church in reference to the labor movement? we mean: What demands, in accordance with the gospel, should evangelical Christians, be they clergymen or laymen, make upon the labor movement, what aims should they inculcate, and what influences should they exert over it? Everyone should be free, indeed, to express his wishes or follow his theories because the one or the other seems useful or practical. A clergyman may do so, or a layman; but in that case neither would be doing the work of the *church*. Moreover, should, for instance, a synod, or an individual clergyman, by virtue of his office, lay down a particular method for the employment and remuneration of workmen, because present economical conditions demand it, they would overstep the limits of their calling. Should, on the other hand, a synod urge all employers of its district to adopt,

in the name of the gospel, and in the interest of Christian faith and love, a better arrangement in reference to their employés—this would be an action of the church in reference to the labor movement. And not less would it be so, should a layman, a worker in the Inner Mission, a writer, a statesman, or a working-man himself, in the name of the gospel, make this plea. Our question, then, from the evangelical point of view, is: Have we, as the representatives of the gospel of Christ, to set up standards for the labor movement, to make demands upon it? Have we, as Christians, to pass judgment upon its aims, reasons, and means, and are we under obligation to exert an influence upon it, either to resist or to promote it?

We should certainly answer these questions with an unqualified "no," if purely economic interests were at stake; if, as many erroneously hold, political economy were identical with technical science. The well-known German theologian Beyschlag, who was a zealous opponent of Stöcker and his work, showed himself so ignorant in his polemic that he could write the sentence: "*Den Theologen ginge doch zum Beispiel die Technik des Bergbaues nichts an.*" This is undoubtedly true. But it is a mistake to suppose technology and political economy are the same thing. Technology deals with the preparation and treatment of materials. It would be absurd to determine on the basis of the gospel the kind of leather out of which shoes are to be made. But it is childish to think that, such an absurdity removed, the duty of the church in the social sphere is settled. Political economy, in distinction from technology, treats rather of the attitude of man toward worldly goods, and toward his fellow-men with reference to the attitude toward these goods. It treats of man's attitude in general in the production of wealth, its use and distribution. But these are questions (topics) of ethics. Ethical ideas which prevail in a nation or in a class of people influence the method of production, the distribution and use of wealth. The Christian preaching of love to God above all things (above all earthly goods) and of love toward one's fellow-men is, therefore, of great importance for the labor movement. This is also the view of political economists, and they

declare themselves to the same effect. "Deux peuples, qui n'adorent pas le même Dieu, ne cultivent pas la terre de la même manière," says Ribot. And Schmoller once said that even in the way in which a man drives a nail his moral status may be seen.

Because the labor movement is a social movement, and because in social movements the moral attitude of man toward earthly goods and fellow-men is decisive, and because this moral attitude is most decisively affected by Christian ethics, we conclude that the church necessarily has a duty also toward the labor movement. She must plant those virtues which will guarantee to that movement a healthy development, heavenly-mindedness, brotherly love, righteousness, industry, contentment, and love of family. It is her duty to proclaim and establish the Christian teaching of man's duty to rule the world, its teaching in regard to labor, marriage, and government. In her preaching she is to enter into all those interests which move the world of workingmen, in order to permeate and transform it by Christian truth. The first important point of contact, then, between the labor movement and the work of the church is the disposition. A right disposition on the part of employés as well as of employers is what is necessary, and the church offers to help bring this about.

So far, no doubt, we can count upon the general assent of all parties, for the universally acknowledged duty of the church is the cure of souls. This is accomplished by preaching and pastoral visitation, so far as their object is the accomplishment of moral results. But this is not all. The church is interested, not only in the disposition of the individual and its rectification, but also in actual social conditions. As the representative of the gospel, as an institution for the cure of souls, she cannot be indifferent as to the conditions in which workingmen live, and, therefore, she must be interested in the efforts for the improvement of these conditions.

We have now arrived at the central point of our task. All depends upon a right understanding of the proposition concerning the interest of the church in the conditions of the workingmen. We shall first consider what is not meant by this proposition.

In all countries where labor movements have appeared there have been people to whom these were very unwelcome. They perceived that they could make more money if the workingmen would put up with anything. And they have been bold enough to hint to the church that its duty should be to exert all its influence to keep the workingmen "content." The church, they have said, should preach to workingmen heavenly-mindedness, in order that employers might the better gratify their desire of worldly pleasure. Does not Christianity teach obedience to government and to those in authority? Does it not teach contentment and patient forbearance? Does not Christ say: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"? And does he not warn against the danger of riches? Therefore, good workingmen, show yourselves true Christians in bearing patiently all adversity, and comfort yourselves in privation with the hope of eternal life! Such preaching as that to combat the labor movement has been expected of the church. It is the deepest insult that could be offered her. Carlyle says of this: "Think of a man who recommends the preaching of faith in God in order that the workingmen in Manchester may remain content at their looms. . . . I would sooner furnish milky ways and planetary systems for the guidance of herring ships than preach religion in order that the constable may remain possible." And Johann Tobias Beck spoke of men who would like to use the gospel as a "heavenly fertilizer for their terrestrial dung-beds." Contrary to this, we affirm that the representatives of the gospel have no interest whatever to maintain the present or any other social or political order. The church of Jesus Christ can prosper in a republic as well as under a monarchy, under serfdom and a feudal system as well as under a thoroughgoing democracy. Social organizations change with the revolutions which come in the course of history, and it never can be the duty of the church to preach: Whoever is for Christianity must be for the old order of things.

Therefore it is never *a priori* the duty of the church to oppose reforms, even if they serve to give a whole class of men greater independence. It is to act under a totally wrong

conception to attempt to apply the command of obedience to government to the relation of workingmen who are only under a voluntary wage-contract with their employers. Therefore, for example, a strike cannot be condemned off-hand. It is rather a necessary and morally justifiable weapon of the workingman in his endeavor to secure such an elevation of his class as is in accord with the condition of the times. I say, in accord with the conditions of the times, for naturally there are also unjustifiable strikes, hopeless from the beginning because the condition of the specific industry does not immediately permit a raising of wages. In spite of this a strike is undertaken simply to make the defeated workingmen dissatisfied with society in general—the favorite method of the social democrats. But the church must not smother the effort of the laboring class for progress and elevation; on the contrary, so far as she is concerned in it, she can only aid such effort. Workingmen must see in the representatives of the gospel their friends, who wish them well, rejoice in their progress, and, when occasion arises, vigorously reprove their excesses.

Christianity spreads culture wherever it goes. It teaches uncivilized peoples to read, gives them a language and literature, begets in them the desire of civilized life, love of cleanliness, neatness, order, comfort, and the joys of family life. If now a class of workingmen finds itself in a condition where they cannot enjoy family life because the hours of labor reach far into the evening, a condition where wages are not sufficient to educate the children and provide proper homes, where even the wife and children are compelled to work early and late—ought we not to rejoice if from such a condition they should rise to a higher one, to one that permits the individual workingman to spend some time with his family, and to cultivate his mind and soul? However, it is to be remembered that it will seldom be our task to awaken the desire to obtain this condition, because, unfortunately, this has already been done by agitators in the wrong way. It will rather be our duty to guide and ennoble; at any rate, it cannot be our duty to suppress for the sake of religion every desire of workingmen for the improvement of their condition.

One reason why the church, in Germany at least, and also in England up to the time of the Christian socialists, suffered the suspicion and hatred of the workingmen was because its representatives felt themselves called as a sort of ecclesiastical police to oppose every movement of dissatisfaction among them, without inquiring into the reasons of such dissatisfaction. What confidence can workingmen have in a pastor who compliments the manufacturer on his enterprising spirit shown in the extensive enlargements of his business, who contentedly dines with him in his new villa, but when the workingman's wife complains to him of the difficulties of providing for the children, the starvation wages, the straitened home, etc., offers her only the comfort of heavenly patience, without making any attempt to induce the employer to fulfil his Christian duty, and in addition discourses upon obedience to government? He uses categories which belong to the seventeenth century, and is not conscious of the change of social conditions.

We reject, then, emphatically the view that the church's interest in the labor movement is only to suppress it, and that the point of contact between its duty and that movement is that thus the opportunity is given to preach sermons of censure to workingmen.

But we must no less reject the opposite view, which would make it the duty of the church to further the labor movement by taking sides with the workingmen. I have said above the church does not only have an interest in the inner life of the individual, but also in social conditions and relations; yet this must not be misunderstood to mean that certain social conditions are alone compatible with Christianity, and that the labor movement is ushering in the truly Christian social order. I am inclined to believe that this latter view is the more dangerous perversion of the Christian religion. While the view which we opposed before emphasizes so one-sidedly the supernatural character of Christianity that its necessary participation in the social life on earth is obstructed, this view drags religion down into the material world and realizes the kingdom of God in the establishment of a social system with the equalization of all classes,

of the tasks of life, and of property corresponding to these. Under this delusion sides are taken for the workingmen in the name of the gospel.

Of course, this is possible only for a theology which misunderstands the central truth of Christianity. In America it is the Unitarians who attempt to secularize our religion in a best order of society. I mention, as an example, Jaynes and his work *Unitarianism as a Social Force*. It is said Unitarianism aims at the culture of the individual character, not in the interest of a doubtful salvation in the future, but because it conceives Christianity to be the basis of the social order of this world. For it the kingdom of God is realized through acts of love in the present age. The so-called eternal life of the theologians is nothing else than what may be realized through Christian love and righteousness in the social life. The Unitarians of Germany—the name is applicable to an outgrowth of the school of Ritschl—hold the same view. Christian hope, in the sense of the old confessions, is entirely blotted out of their program, and they conceive the duty of the church to be the realization on earth of the Christian idea of love.

From such a position it is not far to the dream of an order of society which does away with the differences among men even in economic and social relations. We have the explicit declaration from Friedrich Naumann: "Christianity has for its aim the abolition of poverty." From this point of view, among other things, the possession of large landed estates is attacked as contrary to the gospel. On this theory, the connection between the church and the labor movement is a very close one and perfectly clear. The latter aims at ends which are also directly the ends of the gospel, viz., to bring about an order of society as far as possible communistic in its constitution. The clergy have, therefore, nothing better to do than to take the lead of the social democrats, in order to make it clear to them that in reality their party is something very Christian, and all it needs to do is to give up its mistaken enmity toward Christianity. So in Germany, some time ago, the "Candidat der Theologie" von Wächter, and recently the former pastors Göhre and

Blumhardt, have publicly united with the social democracy, on the supposition that thus they fulfilled the ends of Christianity and would be the true representatives and preachers of the gospel.

This phenomenon is nothing new. We know such a combination of religion with the spirit of social revolution in the heathenism of pre-Christian times. We meet it in the church as early as the fifth century in the Donatist sect of the Circumcellians. It is found throughout the Middle Ages, and it took on a dangerous character in the peasants' wars and the Anabaptists of the Reformation.³ The fundamental error is a legal conception of Christianity. As Moses legally established a definite social system, based upon the protection of family property, so Christ is said to have desired to realize the ideal of universal equality through the renunciation of individual property and the abolition of both wealth and poverty. In all these phenomena in the history of the church there were present ideas about the abolition of war, arms, civil government, titles, and honors, and an outspoken disinclination to art and science. A representative of this legal Christianity was, for example, Carlstadt. Under his influence interest in theological studies diminished perceptibly; he himself would no longer confer the master's degree, because Jesus had prohibited the use of titles. And, in order to realize true Christianity, he went into the country to serve as a waiter in peasant's garb.

Over against these legalistic and fanatical aberrations, Luther held fast to the gospel of the liberty of the children of God in its biblical purity. By Christian equality he understood the equal right of everyone to come before God without mediation of the papal priest caste, but not, as did Carlstadt, in the equalization of culture, dress, and property. By Christian liberty Luther understood deliverance from the fear of punishment, since there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, but not in freedom from tithes, as did Münzer and the peasants. The same duty to guard Christian truths from materialistic,

³See their history in my work, *Die christlich-socialen Ideen der Reformationszeit und ihre Vorgeschichte*, Gütersloh, 1896; also in my work, *Mitarbeit*, *ibid.*; and *Die nordafrikanischen Circumcellionen im 4. u. 5. Jahrhundert* in the "Universitätschrift," Greifswald, 1900.

social-political corruptions rests again upon the servants of the church today. The entire activity of the church is the cure of souls; its only purpose is through the Word to bring souls to Christ and keep them in him. No external conditions, whether of poverty or riches, can permanently deprive a soul of its calling to enjoy a blessed life in Christ.

The main argument for this position is the attitude of the apostle Paul toward slavery. When among the Christian slaves of his time also there was a movement to shake off their yoke under the cover of Christian liberty and brotherhood, he emphasized with great earnestness the duty of obedience. He never demanded of Christians that they should set free their slaves. He sent Onesimus back to Philemon. He did not declare slavery to be incompatible with Christianity. Therefore, neither can we do so. Often Paul had to give to slaves what seems to us too harsh admonitions, in order to prevent the idea that the liberty which he proclaimed had anything to do with the social relation between master and slave. We affirm, the abuse of slavery is un-Christian, and possibly we say also, this abuse is almost unavoidable. In the above sense we work for the abolition of slavery everywhere, but not in the sense that there is a Christian law regulating the external relations of men to one another, or the outward form of social dependence.

Therefore we can no more appeal to the gospel in the interest of the aims of the labor movement, so far as these have for their end the equalization of the classes and the abolition of capital, than we can appeal to it against them. For we affirm that the aim of Christianity is to win men for the kingdom of heaven, and that can be done under every social condition, in every social state, and under any kind of political organization.

And yet it was necessary to maintain the proposition that the church has an interest in social conditions as well as in the individual disposition. We have shown what was not meant by that proposition. It is not meant that the realization or retention of definite social relations is the aim and end of the church. Nevertheless, these may become means to an end. Let us now make that clear.

However much we emphasize that the gospel is intended for the soul of man, still we are not less convinced that God has united soul and body into one. The importance of this fact may be underestimated to the detriment of the spiritual life. Man certainly has a body in which the soul that is destined for salvation dwells. And bodily conditions influence the life of the soul. There is a certain refined philosophy which is so taken up with the life of the soul that it despises all material things. This was the case with the old heathen philosophy in its contempt of the humbler callings of life. From it the philosophy of the Middle Ages borrowed the same view by differentiating between a life of meditation and contemplation as alone worthy of a Christian, and the civil life as a lower phase. Similarly, also, the intellectualism of the theology of the nineteenth century has often misunderstood the importance of external relations, and particularly with reference to the Christian life of faith and holiness. We must recognize that the latter is affected when the mind is engrossed with external circumstances and conditions. According to the Scriptures, the two means which the prince of darkness uses to turn away men from Christ are the world and the flesh. We do not here speak of the latter. But how shall we translate the biblical expression "world" into the language of our time? We shall not go wrong if we say "the world" is the environment. In the parable of the four kinds of soil Jesus shows his disciples how environment affects the spiritual life. And does not every Christian have the experience that love and faith are more difficult in certain circumstances than in others? Is not scriptural fasting a testimony that the Christian must withdraw for a time from many relations in order to escape without damage to his inner life? Do not missionaries have the experience that in the case of different peoples the reception of the gospel is affected in different degrees, not only by the condition of the heart, but also by the differing circumstances? It is a fact of missionary history that not infrequently missionaries work without success for a long time, because the circumstances which they find stand in the way. So, then, everywhere the Christian life is affected by the

circumstances surrounding a man, be it that they support, or assist even by their very opposition, or else that they prevent and tempt to evil.

To these external conditions, moreover, belong also the social relations, *i. e.*, those relations in which the individual is involved in consequence of the economic, moral, and social condition of the class or the whole nation. Certainly rich people can be saved. But Jesus himself points out the danger to the soul which may arise from riches (Luke 18:24). These dangers may vary in degree, according as the legislation of a country permits greater or less freedom in the abuse of wealth. The same we must say of poverty. Certainly poor people can be saved. But there is a kind of poverty which blunts in great measure the receptivity of the soul for divine truth. Concerning the children of Israel in Egypt it is said: "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage" (Exod. 6:9). A social condition is there described which seriously affected the religious life, a condition under which pastoral work is almost impossible. But also in modern times do we know of labor conditions very similar to that cruel bondage coupled with anguish and distress of spirit. When the pastor meets with these, he will, in spite of them, try again and again to reach the soul, but he will not stop with making a change in these conditions a subject of prayer; he will also work for that end so far as it is in his power.

He will take the same attitude toward everything in social life which tends to temptation, whether by making sin attractive to the senses or by deadening mind and conscience. How dangerous it is for workingmen to receive on Saturday their weekly wages in a place where liquor is sold! The pastor who sees the evil consequences of this (drunkenness, abuse of wife and children, poverty, etc.) will of course endeavor to bring the soul to Christ; he will work for a change of heart; but will he not at the same time exert his influence for the abolition of such an institution, *i. e.*, be interested in bringing about a different social condition? But the moment he does this he participates in the labor question, yet without going outside his pastoral

duties. The same can be shown in numberless other relations. There is another class of cases where it is the duty of the state to interfere with its mighty arm. In Germany the state has realized its duty to protect the weak, not only in the battle for physical existence, but also in that for moral development. As in America some states prohibit the sale of liquor in order to protect the weak against their own weakness, so Germany has undertaken by legislation an extended protection of youth. I refer to the law of guardianship, which went into effect only this year, and to the introduction previously of compulsory education in Christian institutions, the protection of Sunday, and the like.

Whoever takes part in politics in order to secure such laws works in the interest of the kingdom of God. And we do not see why the church should not work for a change of such evil conditions. Young people whom we have confirmed we see exposed to many dangers when they leave us, dangers which arise chiefly from the insufficient oversight which juvenile workers receive. Daily in my prayers I remember them in their dangers; but should I not also rejoice when these dangers become less through stricter discipline? Should I not also myself try to improve such conditions? And if all pastors in any country, having the same experiences with the young people under their care, unite in protests and petitions to the legislative powers, do they thereby leave the sphere of their pastoral work? Well do we know that not all temptations can be removed, and that the Christian must withstand many temptations to become tried in the faith; but wilfully to let dangers remain that can be removed, that is tempting God.

When I was a pastor in a large manufacturing town, I saw how the family life of the workingmen was very much harmed through the long hours of labor. The family had no evening together, for the children were already asleep when the father came home from the factory, and in the morning he had to leave again before they were awake. How can there be any "bringing up" under such conditions? What becomes of the duty the workingman owes to his own soul in such circumstances? I

considered it therefore my Christian duty to ask and admonish the manufacturers to shorten the hours of labor. And this I did as a pastor. But I cannot deny that in so doing I found myself in the midst of the labor movement.

And this gives us a new field for pastoral work. Social relations bring temptation, not only to the workingmen and the poor, but also to employers. They in their turn are greatly tempted to sacrifice the interests of their employés when competition impels them to the utmost exertion of their powers. Thus it may happen that even noble-minded and Christian employers become guilty of injustice and unkindness to their employés, either because they are not sufficiently able to put themselves in their places, or else because the actions of their selfish and conscienceless competitors force them to it. In this state of things it becomes the duty of the church, on the one hand, to make conscience keener and stronger by the preaching of righteousness and love, and, on the other hand, to endeavor to secure such regulations as will make it most difficult to do violence to these Christian virtues.

I mention one more example where the connection between pastoral work and social conditions becomes most evident. It is the question of proper dwelling places. At the last Anglican church congress, in October, 1900, a report upon this subject was given by Rev. Mr. Horsley. He was for twenty-four years pastor in London, and came to know dwellings of workingmen in which, according to his opinion, it is impossible to lead a Christian life. But we have the same state of things in all large cities, and not only in large cities, but also in smaller ones, and not only in cities, but also in the country. The family is the germ cell of society. To protect the family life, to build it up, to make it Christian—this must ever be the aim of the philanthropist. The stronghold of family life is a family home. But innumerable abodes of workingmen do not deserve the name of homes. But even where it is not the case that more than one family lives in the same place, the rooms are often so small as to make an orderly family life impossible. When parents and children, little ones and those of older years, sleep together

without separation in one room, there is no possibility of bringing them up in modesty and chastity. When, in addition to this, part of the room is rented to lodgers of both sexes, the condition of things is simply abominable. Besides, there is the discomfort and dirt. What sort of life does the soul live in such places? Children have no room to prepare their school lessons; nor can anything be done for mutual entertainment, advancement, and edification. When a pastor steps into such a house, the feeling immediately comes over him that a change must be made. Rev. Mr. Horsley says: "To preach in such homes chastity and the fear of God, without doing anything to change things, is not only a fruitless attempt, but religious insanity."

Thus is shown the close connection of the pastor's work with that of the economist. How shall an improvement in the homes of the workingmen be brought about? The giving of money to enable the individual to rent a better house would be only childish work. There is a twofold possibility: it may be done through societies or through laws. Christian societies instituted for that purpose existed in Germany in the forties of the century just closed. At that time V. A. Huber founded the mutual building association, which developed a humane activity, though at first it found but little appreciation. In the last decade the Inner Mission has taken up this work. The most zealous worker for the improvement of workingmen's homes has been Pastor v. Bodelschwingh who founded the society called the "Workingmen's Home Society." However, public sentiment in Germany inclines to the view that the state should be called on to give assistance here. And though in this way political activity for the improvement of dwellings is developed, yet the home question can never be separated from pastoral work, and therefore the pastor, because of his calling, cannot rid himself of the duty of participating in these efforts.

We have rejected the view that the duty of the church toward the labor movement is its suppression, and likewise we have rejected the opposite view that its duty, according to the gospel, is to promote the efforts of the workingmen toward communism.

Nevertheless, the pastoral duty of the church includes an inquiry into the social conditions with which the labor movement is concerned, in order to determine how far they are detrimental or favorable to the development of the religious and moral life. And the representatives of the gospel through which the souls of men are to be saved cannot be excused from exerting an influence upon this development. The influence actually exerted by Christianity upon labor conditions and upon society in general throughout the centuries is to be explained from this point of view. Once more we take slavery as an example. The greater the number of slave-owners that were converted in the early periods of the Christian church, the better treatment the slaves received. It was one thing to be the slave of a heathen master, and another to be one in a Christian home. The apostle characterizes the former class in 1 Tim. 6: 1 as "servants under the yoke." The more the Christian status and treatment of slaves prevailed, an influence was necessarily exerted upon slavery in general. And so we actually find a milder legislation in regard to the treatment of slaves in the second Christian century.

Similarly, if at the present time the church in the interest of pastoral work demands a better treatment of minors, an improvement in workingmen's homes, etc., this demand will exert a slow but certain influence upon public opinion, and through it there will also come changes in the social conditions, coinciding frequently with the aims of the labor movement. Christianity everywhere has secured benefits for all civilized life, even without directly aiming at these. But in order to appreciate duly this influence, there is needed a deeper inquiry into the laws of the development of social conditions, such as I have tried to give in my work, *Die Mitarbeit der Kirche an der Lösung der sozialen Frage, auf Grund einer kurzgefassten Volkswirtschaftslehre und eines Systems der christlichen Socialethik* (second edition, 1897).

At every point of contact, however, between the work of the church and social movements these two things are equally to be maintained: (1) The only duty of the church is to work for the

cure of souls. It has to prepare the way for the kingdom of God in this world of sin and imperfection, leaving it to the Lord himself to establish it when he comes in glory. (2) The soul is no abstract being, but it is influenced in many ways through the body with its desires, impulses, and environment. To strive to make these latter as helpful as possible must therefore not seldom be the imperative duty of the pastor. Here we find the point of contact between the work of the church and the labor movement.